

College of New Caledonia



**Aboriginal Service Plan
Year 3 Progress Report
(Overview)**

January 15, 2011



Submitted to:
Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Unit
Ministry of Science and Universities

***College of New Caledonia
3330 - 22nd Avenue
Prince George BC V2N 1P8***

Aboriginal Service Plan – Year 3 Report

Over the past three years the College of New Caledonia (CNC) has embraced a new way of working with local Aboriginal partners to deliver programs and services that increase access, participation and success for Aboriginal students. This community-driven and responsive approach has resulted in dramatically successful outcomes and a sustainable legacy of mutually respectful partnerships. These new relationships will form a strong foundation for the College’s ultimate goal of indigenization. Ongoing recognition of the need for shared accountability by CNC, the Ministry and the Aboriginal communities will ensure that the needs of Aboriginal learners continue to be met.

Overall, three key themes have emerged:

1. Direction from the Aboriginal community is fundamental to successful Aboriginal education.
2. Meaningful engagement requires a significant investment of time, commitment, and funding.
3. Culturally-sensitive student services are essential to Aboriginal student success.

CNC found that by focusing on partnerships and collaboration all other objectives fell into place. The College met and greatly exceeded all 3-year ASP targets:

- Enrollment of Aboriginal learners increased from 744 to 1,552 (109% increase from baseline to 2010)
- Credentials achieved by Aboriginal learners increased from 69 to 156 (126% increase).

Sustainable legacies include an enhanced institutional understanding of the needs of Aboriginal learners and their communities; expanded student support services; and strong connections with local Aboriginal communities that will be sustained in part by the ongoing Aboriginal Liaison staff positions.

Aboriginal Service Plan Overview

Briefly summarize your institutions’ ASP goals, objectives, and intended outcomes, and explain how they link to the ALMD Aboriginal Service Plan Initiative’s goals and objectives.

CNC’s objectives and outcomes link directly to the Ministry’s goals as follows:

| Ministry Goals | CNC Objectives | CNC Intended Outcomes (3-Year Targets) |
|---|--|--|
| Increase the access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners. | Increase the number of Aboriginal learners accessing a credential program. | 6% increase in enrollment of Aboriginal learners in credential programs. |
| | Increase the number of credentials achieved by Aboriginal learners. | 3% increase in the number of credentials achieved by Aboriginal learners. |
| Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners. | Increase Aboriginal learner satisfaction with CNC programming. | 6% increase in enrollment of Aboriginal learners in all programs. |
| | Increase the receptivity and relevance of CNC programming for Aboriginal learners. | 1% increase in immediate transition rates from high school to CNC for Aboriginal learners. |
| | Enhance Aboriginal language and culture programming at CNC. | 100% increase in the number of cultural learning events. |
| Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education. | Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations. | 8 new partnership agreements (MOUs, protocol agreements etc) signed. |

Provide a summary assessment of your institutions’ performance in meeting these goals, objectives and intended outcomes, including how they may have changed over the course of the initiative

CNC’s quantitative results clearly demonstrate that the College’s target outcomes for the ASP were met and in fact greatly exceeded (please see chart below). Clearly, CNC’s programming is increasingly meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners; the enhanced support services are ensuring that the learners succeed, and a fundamental shift is occurring in the Aboriginal community’s engagement with the College. While some of these numerical increases may reflect increased self-reporting of Aboriginal status, this in itself speaks to a College culture that is now perceived as being more welcoming to learners of Aboriginal ancestry with program deliveries that are more inclusive of Aboriginal knowledge.

| CNC Intended Outcomes (3-Year Targets) | Actual Outcomes |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 6% increase in enrollment of Aboriginal learners in credential programs. | 37% increase |
| 3% increase in the number of credentials achieved by Aboriginal learners. | 126% increase |
| 6% increase in enrollment of Aboriginal learners in all programs. | 109% increase |
| 1% increase in immediate transition rates from high school to CNC for Aboriginal learners. | 18% increase (after Year 2) |
| 100% increase in the number of cultural learning events held on campus or hosted by the College. | 1600% increase |
| 8 new partnership agreements (MOUs, protocol agreements) signed. | 44 new partnership agreements signed |

In addition to these measurable outcomes, CNC has noticed some equally dramatic although less quantifiable results relating to the quality and depth of the relationships that the college has established with local Aboriginal communities. Over the course of the ASP the importance of this relationship-building and community engagement became increasingly apparent, and this will be described in more detail below. Underlying all of these successful outcomes is a fundamental shift in the way that the College operates with respect to Aboriginal education; a shift that was associated with internal growth occurring at both personal and organizational levels. The result is a new institutional awareness and understanding of Aboriginal education.

In addition, outline the major lessons you learned from your institution’s ASP experience – what worked well and what would you do differently.

Through the ASP, CNC learned that *one size does not fit all*; programs and services for Aboriginal learners must be designed and delivered at the local level with direction provided by the Aboriginal community, and this process must be responsive, timely and flexible.

The CNC ASP essentially consisted of five separate plans, one in each geographical region served by CNC. This diversity, while adding to the complexity of ASP coordination and reporting, allowed the College to meet the needs of the unique populations of learners associated with each campus. At the Prince George campus, for example, where many students are living away from their home communities, student supports delivered in a culturally-sensitive environment were crucial to student success. At the more rural campuses, where the students are more closely associated with

their home communities, the partnerships that developed between the regional campuses and local First Nations enabled the College to explore a new way of working together that allowed for shared decision-making and encouraged shared accountability.

While the models introduced at most campuses were very successful, as noted above, this was not universally true. Where the College had preconceived ideas as to which programs and services would be offered there was less engagement by the Aboriginal community. When sufficient time was not invested in relationship building, the long term outcomes were less positive. In general, the College underestimated how much time, effort and commitment would be required to build effective, sustainable, mutually-respectful working relationships. In the future, this will be taken into account when working with Aboriginal partners.

The lessons learned through this partnership process will now be applied on a College-wide basis to governance issues through the new CNC Yinka Dene Education Council. Overall, the three themes that emerged during the initial ASP planning and consultation process remained central to the ASP throughout its implementation; language, culture and support.

Partnerships and Engagement

Briefly summarize your institution’s partnership and engagement activities with Aboriginal communities, including the nature of the partnerships (e.g., affiliation agreements for accreditation, joint curriculum development, etc.) how they were planned, funded, implemented, monitored and assessed.

CNC’s partnership and engagement activities were developed in consultation with the Aboriginal communities during the ASP planning process. They evolved over the course of the ASP into several unique models tailored to fit the needs of the Aboriginal communities that each campus serves. These activities can be summarized as follows:

- Enhancement of student supports under the direction of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Establishment of the Nechako Working Group to provide direction for Nechako Campus
- Establishment of the Lakes District Aboriginal Steering Committee to provide direction for Lakes District Campus
- Inception of the CNC Yinka Dene Education Council as a college-wide advisory group
- Creation of Aboriginal Advisor/Liaison positions at each regional campus
- Joint curriculum development with Aboriginal Elders and other holders of traditional knowledge
- Development and delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal students through partnerships formalized by MOUs and other agreements.

At the campus in Prince George, the ancestry of the Aboriginal student population includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee directed the CNC Aboriginal Education Advisor to focus on enhancing student supports. The College also instituted a new position, the Senior Policy Advisor, who serves as an advisor to the President on Aboriginal education issues. The creation of this position revitalized the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and provided new incentive for Aboriginal partners to participate in College program planning and development.

At Lakes District and Nechako campuses, extensive and successful engagement occurred with the region’s 13 unique and geographically distinct First Nations. In the Nechako region, a Working Group was formed comprised of First Nations community members as well as representatives from local Aboriginal organizations. The Working Group meets on a regular basis, with hosting duties being rotated

through the First Nation communities. At Lakes District Campus, the Aboriginal Steering Committee is comprised of representatives appointed by the Chiefs of each of the six local First Nations. At both campuses the committees provide direction to the College on all aspects of the ASP. Over time, ways of working together (such as written guidelines for engagement, rotation of hosting duties between each First Nation, provision of honorariums for attendance, and solicitation of feedback through a survey after each meeting) have developed, with the result being productive and meaningful meetings. The resulting relationships have profoundly altered the way in which these campuses operate. The Aboriginal partners report feeling valued and effective. As one First Nation representative commented, “it is clear we have had a great impact”.

The advisory committees that were established through the ASP will continue to provide direction to the College on a regional level. In addition, regional representatives will participate in the new college-wide advisory group, the CNC Yinka Dene Education Council. This Council, which is currently establishing its terms of reference, will provide direction to the college President on Aboriginal education including governance issues.

At Quesnel and Mackenzie campuses, the First Nations are more geographically isolated and less engaged with the College, so advisory committees were not established. At these campuses, staff worked directly with each First Nation to put in place agreements to deliver services. For example, funds were provided to the Tsay Keh Dene, located on a remote reserve at the head of Williston Lake, to assist Aboriginal adult learners to access provincial curriculum through distance education. While this resulted in effective delivery of these particular programs, this model is less likely to result in a long term self-sustaining legacy of relationships. In order to address this concern, an Aboriginal Advisor/Liaison position was created in 2010. This position has already, in 3 months, proven to be a very effective means of increasing engagement in this vastly diverse and remote area.

The regional Aboriginal Advisor/Liaison positions were crucial for bridging the gap between the College and the Aboriginal communities, and facilitating reciprocal engagement. Key to this success was the College’s ability to hire individuals of Aboriginal ancestry into these positions. This occurred through a successful application to the Human Rights Tribunal in 2009. Not only did the Liaisons reach out to the communities from the College, they brought the communities into the College by demystifying protocol; educating students and staff in Aboriginal culture and language; and ensuring that Elders played an increasingly central role in College programming.

Partnerships were formalized through MOUs and other formal agreements. Examples of these can be found in Appendix A. Overall, 24 agreements were signed in 2010. In most cases, ASP funds were used by CNC to administer and deliver these programs, while in other cases funds were transferred to the bands or organizations for administration. For example, a small amount of funds were transferred to the six bands in the Lakes District Campus region so that the bands could hire Community Coordinators to work directly with the Aboriginal Advisor/Liaison. Performance expectations were clearly laid out in the MOUs and monitoring of outcomes was carried out by CNC administrators.

Joint curriculum development was another area of formal partnership that evolved through the ASP. College faculty worked closely with local Aboriginal Elders and other holders of traditional knowledge to develop curriculum for language courses (Métis and Carrier); educational sessions for staff, students and the community; and entire programs such as the Carrier DSTC Program.

Provide a summary assessment of your partnerships and engagement activities, including what worked well and what could be improved in the future.

Partnerships and engagement were a primary focus of the CNC ASP, and will be a lasting legacy of the ASP program. Over time, these new reciprocal relationships became a source of great satisfaction and personal growth for both CNC staff and the Aboriginal communities. What worked well was an approach which, while always based on shared decision making, took into account the unique nature of each region. The investment of significant amounts of time and effort in building trust and establishing processes for engagement was also crucial. In the future, consulting with the Aboriginal partners before initiating any new programming or services will ensure that the Aboriginal voice continues to provide direction.

Sustainability and Legacies

Identify any legacies for your institution as a result of the ASP (legacies include sustainable relationships, programs, and student service initiatives that enhance Aboriginal student participation and success).

The main legacies for CNC as a result of the ASP can be summarized as follows:

- Institutional awareness of Aboriginal education
- Aboriginal Liaison positions
- Aboriginal advisory committees
- CNC Yinka Dene Education Council
- Gathering Places
- Human Resources Special Program for hiring based on Aboriginal ancestry
- Enhanced support services for students.

The ASP created institutional awareness of Aboriginal education and an understanding of the issues facing students and communities. Administration now recognizes that programs and services for Aboriginal learners are integral to College operations. Working closely with local First Nations and Aboriginal organizations through the advisory committees has had a profound impact on administrators, who are backing away from being “the people that know”, and recognizing the knowledge of Aboriginal partners and the need for Aboriginal people to control their own education.

The Aboriginal Liaison positions that were established through the ASP will be funded by CNC for 2011/2012, thus providing an ongoing link between the communities and the College. The College has recognized how vital these positions are for Aboriginal education. The Aboriginal Liaisons will also play a key role in ensuring that the Aboriginal advisory committees established at several campuses will continue to function, although possibly in a reduced capacity without ASP funding. The CNC Yinka Dene Education Council, a new college-wide advisory group that has been established to look at governance issues, will also be a lasting legacy of the ASP.

Gathering Places at several campuses are also permanent legacies that received funding through the ASP. At some campuses these are physical spaces, while other campuses have integrated Aboriginal artwork and signage throughout the campus buildings.

The Human Resources Special Program, which was awarded through the HR Tribunal, was initiated to address the need to hire individuals of Aboriginal ancestry for key ASP positions. This program, which is in Year 1 of 5 years, will have a lasting impact on the number of Aboriginal employees at CNC.

Many support services for students, while in existence prior to the ASP, were enhanced by ASP funding. Many of these enhanced services will continue.

Identify any legacies for Aboriginal community partners your institution has worked with as a result of the ASP.

Many of the legacies identified for the College will be of lasting importance for the Aboriginal communities as well. The communities will retain an active voice in Aboriginal education through the advisory committees, the Aboriginal liaisons, and the CNC Yinka Dene Education Council.

The advisory committees that have been established through the ASP are serving a role beyond that of giving the communities a voice at the College. These meetings are an opportunity for the communities to meet locally and discuss education, something that was not common in the past, and to have a louder voice at the provincial table. The partnerships that have developed between the bands will lead to better use of available funding; for example, First Nations communities in the Nechako Region are now submitting joint proposals for educational initiatives rather than competing for limited resources.

Based on your experience with the ASP, outline your suggested next steps for your institution and for the adult education system in terms of increasing Aboriginal learners access, participation and success, and supporting partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal communities.

The ASP has provided CNC with an outstanding opportunity to develop relationships with Aboriginal partners and to enhance programs and services for Aboriginal students. The College is committed to sustaining and building on the progress that has been made during the three years of the ASP, and for this reason has allocated ongoing funding towards some core ASP activities (such as the Aboriginal Liaison positions). A renewed commitment on the part of the Ministry to provide ongoing and higher levels of base funding for Aboriginal education in the future will be also be crucial to meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners.

Establishment of the CNC Yinka Dene Education Council at CNC is a first step towards involving Aboriginal partners in College governance. This is a model which could be adopted at other institutions and supported, in the future, by language at the provincial legislative level that addresses Aboriginal participation in post-secondary institutions.

The ASP pilot program has clearly demonstrated that Aboriginal communities are willing and able to provide the needed direction for Aboriginal education. By supporting this involvement and working with the Ministry to make appropriate funding available, CNC will continue to experience increased access, participation and success for Aboriginal students.